

commands typically consist of larger staffs, have longer planning horizons, and have access to more information. Commanders at lower echelons, such as a regiment and/or group and below, may modify the planning process to meet their situation (staff resources, shorter planning horizons, information available). Whether planning occurs at the component level, the battalion level, or the squadron level, the commander and his staff must master the Marine Corps Planning Process so they can fully participate in integrated planning.

The Marine Corps Planning Process is an internal planning process used by Marine Corps operating forces. It aligns with and complements the joint deliberate and crisis action planning processes found in Joint Pub 5-0, *Doctrine for Planning Joint Operations*. Appendix A discusses the relationship between the Marine Corps Planning Process and joint planning. When designated as a joint force commander or when preparing a supporting plan in a campaign, a Marine commander and his staff will use the joint planning procedures and the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System (JOPES) found in the Joint Pub 5 series. If planning an amphibious operation, a Marine commander and his staff refer to Joint Pub 3-02, *Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations*, for guidance.

## **1001. Tenets of the Marine Corps Planning Process**

The tenets of the Marine Corps Planning Process—top-down planning, single-battle concept, and integrated planning—are derived from the doctrine of maneuver warfare. These tenets guide the commander's use of his staff to plan and execute military operations. Top-down planning and the single-battle concept ensure unity of effort, while the commander uses warfighting functions (see app. B) as the building blocks of integrated planning.

### **a. Top-Down Planning**

Planning is a fundamental responsibility of command. The commander must not merely participate in planning, he must drive the process. His intent and guidance are key to planning. The commander uses planning to gain knowledge and situational awareness to support his decisionmaking process. His plan, communicated in oral, graphic, or written form, translates his guidance into a concept of operations. His subordinate commanders use his guidance and concept of operations to accomplish the mission.

### **b. Single-Battle Concept**

Operations or events in one part of the battlespace may have profound and often unintended effects on other areas and events, therefore a commander must always view the battlespace as an indivisible entity. The single-battle concept allows the commander to effectively focus the efforts of all the elements of the force to accomplish the mission. While the battlespace may be conceptually divided as deep, close, and rear to assist planning and decentralized execution, the commander's intent ensures unity of effort by fighting a single battle.

### **c. Integrated Planning**

Integrated planning is a disciplined approach to planning that is systematic, coordinated, and thorough. It is based on the warfighting functions of command and control, maneuver, fires, intelligence, logistics, and force protection. Planners use these warfighting functions to integrate the planning effort and supervise execution of the plan. Planners use integrated planning to consider all relevant factors, reduce omissions, and share information across all the warfighting functions. The key to integrated planning is the assignment of appropriate personnel to represent each warfighting function. This does not mean that a warfighting function representative cannot be a staff representative. A warfighting function representative must be knowledgeable and experienced in his functional area. See appendix B for further information on the warfighting functions.

## 1002. The Marine Corps Planning Process

The Marine Corps Planning Process establishes procedures for analyzing a mission, developing and wargaming courses of action (COAs) against the threat, comparing friendly COAs against the commander's criteria and each other, selecting a COA, preparing an operation order (OPORD) or operation plan (OPLAN) for execution, and transitioning the order or plan to those tasked with its execution. The Marine Corps Planning Process organizes these procedures into six manageable, logical steps (see fig. 1-1). These steps provide the commander and his staff, at all levels, a means to organize their planning activities, to transmit plans to subordinates and subordinate commands, and to share a common understanding of the mission and commander's intent. Interactions among various planning steps allow a concurrent, coordinated effort that maintains flexibility, makes efficient use of time available, and facilitates continuous information sharing. See appendix C for further information on organizing the planning effort.

### a. Mission Analysis

Mission analysis is the first step in planning, and it drives the Marine Corps Planning Process. Its purpose is to review and analyze orders, guidance, and other information provided by higher headquarters and to produce a unit mission statement.

### b. Course of Action Development

During COA development, planners use the mission statement (which includes the higher headquarters commander's tasking and intent), commander's intent, and commander's planning guidance to develop COA(s). Each prospective COA is examined to ensure that it is suitable, feasible, acceptable, distinguishable, and complete with respect to the current and anticipated situation, the mission, and the commander's intent.

### c. Course of Action War Game

Course of action wargaming involves a detailed assessment of each COA as it pertains to the enemy and the battlespace. Each friendly COA is

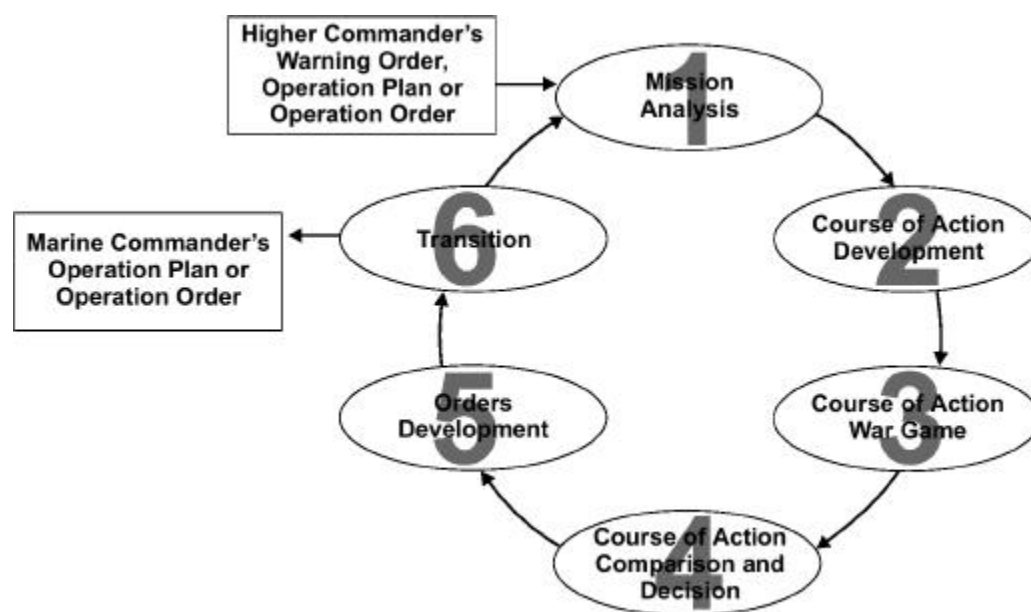


Figure 1-1. Steps in the Marine Corps Planning Process.